

From: Dan Moore
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 9:52am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

I wrote once before on the topic of Microsoft's proposed donation to public schools and why I felt that the donation of MS software was detrimental to public education, but I would like to add that the Microsoft Settlement as it now stands does little or nothing to limit Microsoft's potential for future anti-competitive behavior. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, I'd encourage the careful examination of Dan Kegel's open letter to the DOJ which I have signed. Thank you for your time.
-Dan

Below is the text of my letter of 12/14:

(I'd like to add to this letter that my wife and I have been spending money out of our pockets to make copies of reading packets for her students at the local Kinkos. This is due to the dilapidated condition of the photocopier at her school. We've spent \$80 this year on making copies for students. I am currently attending school and working and our resources are limited. My wife is considering cutting things out of her curriculum, because we cannot afford to continue supporting these projects out of our own funds. The money spent each year on Windows Licenses would easily buy the school a new copy machine, thus relieving us of this burden and allowing my wife to teach her curriculum in the most effective way possible. I believe this misappropriation of public funds to be criminal and call again for public schools to only use software that is freely available.)

To whom it may concern,

I am a computer programmer who has worked as a system administrator and a technical support provider for unix, windows, and macintosh machines. I'm currently working on an electrical engineering degree from the University of Utah. I've been very concerned about the Microsoft Settlement currently proposed by the Department of Justice. The Microsoft Windows Operating System is uniquely unsuited to the public education sector. I believe this to be true for a number of reasons :

1) There are several very good Operating Systems available free of cost (all of the distributions of both Linux and BSD can be obtained for free, the GNU Hurd will soon be freely available). My wife teaches seventh grade english and I believe it's evident that there are many ways in which the funds allocated for public education could be better spent than on complicated and crippling expensive licenses.

2) Microsoft software makes an effort to hide from the user many of the fundamental processes that a computer routinely performs in day to day operation. The objective of hiding these precesses is to make a computer easier to use and probably accounts, in large part, for Microsoft's success in the market, but does not seem suited to educating young people about how computers work. If a person can use a unix clone operating system (such as Linux, BSD, or Hurd) that person can easily adapt to Microsoft software and is often more competent than life long Microsoft users. As the goal is education it seems apparent that unix clones are the better alternative.

3) Most operating systems in use today (including the MS Dos Operating system upon which the windows operating systems are based) are based on Unix. This makes it a very easy jump from Unix to any other Operating System.

4) The freely available software is most often willing to furnish the source code for the Operating Systems and all applications. The educational value of this for Computer Programming students cannot be overstated. For students to be able to examine the source code of professionals will help produce a generation of skilled, creative programmers with very professional coding styles.

5) Microsoft is a for-profit corporation. Adam Smith warned of the dangers of Government Sponsored

Monopolies. To place Microsoft Software in schools is a government endorsement of their product. This could certainly viewed as a sanction. There are many distributions of operating systems furnished entirely by not-for-profit volunteer organizations. (Look at www.debian.org and www.gnu.org for starters). The use of these non-corporate operating systems would help to protect capitalist ideals of a free market and of no government endorsements of corporations.

Taking into account the considerations that makes Microsoft software unsuitable for public education, I feel strongly that the anti-trust settlement ought to be altered such that Microsoft makes their contribution to public education entirely in computer hardware, and that software better suited to public education be selected by schools to be put on those machines.

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